

PART I.—Newcomer in a small town, a young newspaper man, who tells the story, is amazed by the una countable actions of a man who, from the wh low of a fine house, apparently has converse with invisible personages, particularly mentioning one "Simpledoria." The youngoes to his bearding house, the home of Mrs. Apperthwaite, next door to the scene of the strange proceedings, bewildered.

PART II.—Next morning he discovers his strange neighbor is the Hon David Beasley, prominent politician, and universally respected. Telling of his has night's experience, he is markedly interrupted by a fellow hearder, a Mr. George Dowden. Later, with Miss Apperthwaite, he is an unseen witness of a purely imaginary lumping contest between Heasley and a "Bill Hammersley." Miss Apperthwaite appears deeply concerned, there apparently being no possible as planation of the strange proceedings.

PART III.—The reporter learns that leasley and Miss Apperthwaite had at one time been engaged, and that the young lady had broken the engagement because of Beasley's "lack of imagina-

PART IV.—The "mystery" of "Simple-doria" and "Bill Hammersley" is explained by Mr. Dowden. Beasley is caring for a small boy, Hamilton Swift, Junior, a helpless invalid bodily though more than ordinarily bright mentally, the son of dear friends who are dead, and "Simpli-doria" and "Bill Hammersley" are reatures of Bensley's and the small boy's imagination, Bensley and the small boy's imagination, Bensley humoring the little sufferer by the "play acting."

PART V -The reporter becomes acquainted with David Heasier and is invited to his home, where he meets Hamilton Swift, Junior, and his circle of "invistible," which Beasier and George Dowden have made very real to the child.

Autumn trailed the last leaves be hind her flying brown robes one night; we woke to a skurry of snow next morning; and it was winter. Down town, along the sidewalks, the merchants set lines of poles, covered them with evergreen, and ran streamers of green overhead to encourage the festal shopping. Salvation Army Santa Clauses stamped their feet and rang bells on the corners, and pink-faced children fixed their noses immovably to display-windows. For them, the season of seasons, the time of times.

To a certain new reporter on th Despatch the stir and gayety of the streets meant fittle more than that the days had come when it was night in the afternoon, and that he was given fewer political assignments. This was annoying, because Beasley's candidacy for the governorship had given me a personal interest in the political situation. The nominating convention of his party would meet in the spring; the nomination was certain to carry e election also, and thus far Repsident showed more strength than any other man in the field, "Things are looking his way." said Dowden. "He's always worked hard for the party; not on the stump, of course," he laughed; "but the boys understand there are more important things than speechmaking. His record in Congress gave him the confidence of everybody in the state. and, besides that, people always trust a quiet man. I tell you if nothing happens he'll get it "

"I'm fer Beasley." another politician explained, in an interview, "because he's Dave Beasley! Yes, str. I'm fer him. You know the boys say if a man is only for you, in this state, there isn't much in it and he may go back on it; but if he's fer you, he means it. Well, I'm fer Beaslay!"

There were of er candidates, of course; none of them formidable; but I was surprised to learn of the existence of a small but energetic faction opposing our friend in Wainwright, his own town. ("What are you surprised about?" inquired Dowden, "Don't you know what our folks are like, yet? If St. Paul lived in Walnwright, do you suppose he could run for constable without some of his near neighbors getting out to try and down

The head and front (and backhone too) of the opposition to Beasley was a close-fisted, hard-knuckied, risenfrom-the-soil sort of man, one named Simeon Peck. He possessed no in-

considerable influence, I heard; was a hard worker, and vigorously seconded by an energetic lieutenant, a young man named Grist. These, and others they had been able to draw to their faction, were bitterly and eagerly opposed to Beasley's nomination, and

worked without ceasing to prevent it. I quote the invaluable Mr. Dowden agnin: "Grist's against us because he had a quarrel with a clerk in Beasley's office, and wanted Beasley to discharge him, and Beasley wouldn't; Sim Peck's against us out of just plain wronghendedness, and because he never was for anything nor fer anybody In his life. I had a talk with the old mutton-head the other day; he said our candidate ought to be a farmer, a 'man of the common people,' and when I asked him where he'd find anybody



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more 'a man of the common people' than Bensley, he said Bensley was 'too much of a society man' to suit blm! The idea of Dave as a 'society man' was too much for me, and I laughed in Sim Peck's face, but that didn't stop Sim Peck! 'Jest look at the style he lives in,' he yelped. 'Ain't he fairly house he lives in! Look at that big he goes around in that big car of his -and a nigger to drive him, half the time!" I had to holler again, and, of course, that made Sam fwice as mad as he started out to be; and he went off swearing he'd show me, before the campaign was over. The only trouble he and Grist and that crowd could give us would be by finding out something against Dave, and they can't do that because there isn't anything to find

I shared his confidence on this latter score, but was somewhat less sauguine on some others. There were only two newspapers of any political influence in Walnwright, the Despatch and the Journal, both operated in the interest of Bensley's party, and neither had "come out" for him. The gossip I heard about our office led me to think that each was waiting to see what headway Sim Peek and his faction would make; the Journal especially, I knew, had some inclination to coquette with Peck, Grist, and Company. Altogether, their faction was not entirely to be despised.

Thus, my thoughts were a great deal more occupied with Beasley's chances than with the holiday spirit that now, with furs and bells and wreathing mists of snow, breathed good cheer over the town. So little, indeed, had this spirit touched me, that, one evening when one of my colleagues, standing before the grate-fire in the reporter's room, yawned and said he'd be glad when tomorrow was over, I asked him what was the particular trouble with tomorrow.

"Christmus," he explained, languidly. "Always so tedious. Like

"It makes me homesick," said another, a melancholy little man who was forever bragging of his native Duiuth.

"Christmas," I repeated-"tomor

It was Christmas eve, and I had not known it! I leaned back in my chair in a sudden loneliness, what pictures coming before me of long-ago Christmas eves at home!-old Christmas eves when there was a Tree. . .

My name was called; the night city editor had an assignment for me. "Ge up to Sim Peck's, on Madison street," he said. "He thinks he's got some thing on Lavid Beasley, but won't say any more over the telephone. See

I picked up my hat and cont, and left the office at a speed which mas

have given my superior the highest conception of my journalistic zeal. At a telephone station on the next corner I called up Mrs. Apperthwaite's house

and asked for Mr. Dowden. "What are you doing?" I demanded

when his voice respondes.

"Playing bridge," he answered. "Are you going out anywhere?"

"No. What's the trouble?" "I'll tell you later. I may want to see you tonight before I go back to

"All right. I'll be at home all the evening."

I hung up the receiver and made off on my errand.

Down town the streets were crowded with the package-laden people, bending heads and shoulders to the bitter wind, which swept a blinding, sleet-like snow horizontally against them. At corners it struck so tumultuons a blow upon the chest of the pedestrians that for a moment it would buit them, and you could hear them gasping half-smothered "Ahs" like bathers in a heavy surf. Yet there was a gayety in this eager gale; the crowds pressed anxiously, yet bapplly, up and down the street in their generous search for things to give away. It was not the rich who struggled through the storm tonight; these were people who carried their own bundles home. You saw them; toilers and savers, tired mothers and fathers, worn with the grinding thrift of all the year, but now for this one night careless of how hard-saved the money. reckless of everything but the joy of giving it to bring the children joy on the one great tomorrow. So they bent their heads to the freezing wind, their arms laden with daring bundles and their hearts uplifted with the tremulous happiness of giving more than they could afford. Mennwhile, Mr. Simeon Peck, honest man, had chosen this season to work harm if he might to the gentlest of his fellow-men.

I found Mr. Peck waiting for me at his house. There were four other men with him, one of whom I recog nized as Grist, a squat young man with slippery-looking black hair and a lambrequin mustache. They were donning their coats and hats in the hall when I arrived.

"From the Despatch, hay?" Mr. Peck gave me greeting, as he wound a knit comforter about his neck. "That's good. We'd most give you up. This here's Mr. Grist, and Mr. Henry P. Cullop, and Mr. Gus Schulmeyerthree men that feel the same way about Dave Beasley that I do. That other young feller." he waved a mittened hand to the fourth man-"he's from the Journal. Likely you're acqualitied."

The young man from the Journal was unknown to me; moreover, I was far from overjoyed at his presence in the group.

"I've got you newspaper men here, continued Mr. Peck, "because I'm goin' to show you somep'n' about Dave Bensley that'll open a good many folk's eyes when it's in print.

"Well, what is it?" I asked, rather

"Jest hold your horses a little bit," he returned. "Grist and me knows. and so do Mr. Cullop and Mr. Schulmeyer. And I'm goin' to take then and you two reporters to look at it. All ready? Then come on."

He threw open the door, stooped to the gust that took him by the throat, and led the way out into the

"What is he up to?" I gasped to the Journal man as we followed in a straggling line. "I don't know any more than you

he returned. "He thinks he's got something that'll queer Beasley. Peck's an old fool, but it's just possible he's got hold of something. Near ly everybody has one thing, at least, that they don't want found out. It may be a good story. Lord, what a

I pushed ahead to the leader's side. "See here, Mr. Peck-" I began, but he cut me off.

"You listen to me, young man! I'm givin' you some news for your paper, and I'm gittin' at it my own way, but I'll git at it, don't you worry! I'm goin' to let some folks around here know what kind of a feller Dave Bensley really is; yes, and I'm goin' to show George Dowden he can't taugh at me!"

"You're going to show Mr. Dowden?" said. "You mean you're going to take him along with us on this expedition, too?"

"Take him!" Mr. Peck emitted at acrid bark of laughter. "I guess he's at Beasley's, all right."

"No he isn't; he's at home-at Mrs. apperthwaite's-playing cards.

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"That's right" said Grist,

"Gentlemen"-Peck turned to the others-"when we git to Mrs. Apperthwaite's, jest stop outside along the fence a minute. I reckon we'll pick up a recruit."

Shivering, we took up our way again in single file, stumbling through drifts that had deepened incredibly within the hour. The wind was straight against us, and so stingingly sharp and so laden with the driving snow that when we reached Mrs. Apperthwsite's gate (which we ap-

prenched from the north, not prestne Bensley's) my eyes were so full of smarting tears I could see only blurred planes of light dancing vaguely in the darkness, instead of brightly lighted windows. "Now," said Peck, ponting and

turning his back to the wind; "the rest of you gentlemen wait out here. You two newspaper men, you come with me."

He opened the gates and went in, the Journal reporter and I following-all three of us wiping our halfblinded eyes. When we reached the shelter of the front porch. I took the key from my pocket and opened the door.

"I live here," I explained to Mr. Peck.

"All right," he said, "Jest step in and tell George Dowden that Sim



"Gentlemer"-Peck Turned to the Others-"When We Git to Mrs. Apperthwaite's Just Stop Outside Along the Fence a Minute."

Peck's out here and wants to see him at the door a minute. Be quick." I went into the library, and there

sat Dowden contemplatively playing bridge with two of the elderly ladies and Miss Apperthwaite. The lastmentioned person quite took my breath away.

In honor of the Christmas eve (I supposed) she wore an evening dress of black lace, and the only word for what she looked has suffered such misuse that one hesitates over it: yet that is what she was-regal-and no There was a sort of salendor about her. It detracted nothing from this that her expression was a little sad: something not uncommon with her lately; a certain melancholy, faint but detectable, like breath on a mirror. I had attributed it to Jean Valtean, though perhaps tonight it might have been due merely to bridge.

"What is it?" asked Dowden, when, after an apology for disturbing the game, I had drawn him out in the hall.

"I happen to know that he'll be there all evening."

Mr. Peck smote his paims together. "Grist!" he called, over his shoulder, and his colleague struggled forward. "Listen to this: even Dowden nin't at Beasiey's. Ain't the Lord workin' fer us tonight?"

"Why don't you take Dowden with you." I urged, "if there's anything you want to show him?" "By George, I will!" shouted Peck.

"Pve got bit, where the hair's short

out his per circumstance again. "I got the e fellers from 6 newspapers, and all I want is to a this here ball in print tonorrow, an see what the boys that do the wor at the primaries have to say abou ft-and what their wives'll say almy the man that's too high toned to have 'em in his house. I'll bet Beasley thought he was goin' to keep these don's quiet; afraid the tarmers might not believe he's jest the plain man be sets up to be-afraid that folks like you that ain't invited might turn against him. I'll fool him! We're goin' to see what there is to see, and I'm goin' to have these boys from the newspapers write a full account of it. you want to come along, I expect It'il do you a power o' good."

"I'll go," said Dowden, quickly, He got his cont and hat from a table in the hall, and we rejoined the huddled

and shivering group at the gate.
"Got my recruit, gents!" shrilled Peck, slapping Dowden bolsterously on the shoulders. "I reckon he'll git change of heart tonight!"

I motloned toward the front door. "Simeon Peck. He thinks he's got something on Mr. Bensley. He's walting to see you."

Dowden uttered a sharp, balf-coherent exclamation and stepped quickly to the door, "Peck!" he said, as he Jerked it open.

"Oh, I'm here!" declared that gentleman, stepping into view. come around to let you know that you couldn't laugh like a horse at me no more, George Dowden! So you weren't invited, either."

"Invited?" said Dowden. "Invited where?"

"Over to the ball your friend is givin'."

"What friend?"

"Dave Bensley. So you ain't quite good enough to dance with his highsociety friends!"

"What are you talking about?" Dowden demanded, impatiently.

"I reckon you won't be quite so strong fer Bensley," responded Peck with a vindictive little giggle, "whet you find he can use you in his business but when it comes to entertainin'-oh no, you ain't quite the boy!"

"I'd appreciate your explaining," said Dowden. "It's kind of cold standing here."

Peck laughed shrilly. "Then reckon you better git your hat and coat and come along. Can't do us no harm, and might be an eye-opening fer you. Grist and Gus Schulmeyer and Hank Cullop's waitin' out yonder at the gate. We be'n havin' kind of a consultation at my house over somep'n' Grist seen at Beasley's a little earlier in the evening.

"What did Grist ree?" "Cabs! Cabs drivin' up to Beasley's house-a whole lot of 'em. Grist was down the street a piece, and it was pretty dark, but he could see the lamps and hear the doors slam as the people got out. Besides, the whole place is lit up from cellar to attic. Grist come on to my house and told me about it, and I begun usin' the telephone; called up all the men that count in the party-found most of 'em at home, too. I ast 'em if they was invited to this ball tonight; and not a one of 'em was. They're only in politics; they ain't high society enough to be ast to Mr. Beasley's dancin'-parties! But I would

## THE ROMANCE OF WORDS

thought he'd let you in-anyways fer

"BUXOM"

WHEN Milton, in "Paradise Lost," speaks of "winging silently the buxom air," it is at once apparent that the word "buxom" must have had some meaning at that time different from the currently accepted one of rosy and plump. We might refer to a strong healthy woman as buxom, but we would never apply the adjective to the air. In Milton's time, however, the

word had just changed its spelling from "boughsome," a form which gives a clue to its primary meaning of yielding or bending like the boughs of a tree. "Buxom," to Milton, was practically the equivalent of our present-day "pliant." The first change, merely one of form, came when the "gh" began to lose its guttural sound and "ough" was elided into the single letter "x." Then, after the lapse of a number of years, a gradual alteration of the word began to take place, probably due, as Doctor Johnson suggests, to a too liberal construction of the bride's promise in the old English marriage ceremony to be "obedient and buxom (or yielding) in bed and in board." In time, therefore, it came to be applied to full blooded women who were erroneously thought likely to be careless of virtue. Hence it now means plump, rosy, alturing, and is applied only to women who combine these qualities of figure, face and ex-

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Tiresome. "Why do you avoid Flubdub?" "Well, if you ask him how he is, he'll expect you to listen to the details."

May Come to That. "I don't like this barefoot dancing." "Shut up. Fred. First thing you know we'll have to do 'em socially."

EMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL

## Sunday School ' Lesson'

(By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D. D., Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.) Copyright, 1921, Western Newspaper Union.

## LESSON FOR DECEMBER 17

JESUS AMONG FRIENDS AND FOES

LESSON TEXT-Luke 19:28-43; II:14-54, GOLDEN TEXT-Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.—John 16:14 REFERENCE MATERIAL-Lake 1:4,

PP'MARY TOPIC-Jame in the Home f Fr ands.
JUNIOR TOPIC-Jesus Among Friends

And Form.
INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC -Friends and Enemies of Jesus, YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC -Christ's Methods of Dealing With Peo-

1. Jesus in the Home of Frierds (Luke 10:38-42).

There is no place where true character is so clearly revealed as at home. 1. His Reception (v. 38). Martha was the head of the home, therefore she received him. It would be a fine thing if all homes were open to re-

ceive Jesus. 2. Mary Sitting at Jesus' Feet (v. 39). She, of fine spiritual discernment, knew that sitting at the Lord's feet and hearing His Word was that which would please him most.

3. Martha Cumbered About Much Serving (v. 40). Both sisters loved the Lord. It would be impossible to say which loved the more; but Martha was bent on providing a fine meal for Him. She was trying to do so many things that she was on the verge of distraction. This had so completely got on her nerves that she found fault with Jesus for permitting Mary to leave the kitcher to listen to His teaching. Not only did she criticize her sister and Jesus, but she assum the authority to command Him to send Mary back to the kitchen to belp.

4. Jesus' Answer (vv. 41, 42. (1) Rebuked Martha (v. 41). He did this tenderly, for He knew that she loved Him sincerely. (2) Defends Mary (v. 42). He declared that but one thing was needful, and that Mary had chosen that good part which could not be taken away from her.

II. Jesus Among Foes (11:14-23; 29-32: 37-54).

1. Charged With Being in League With the Devil (vv. 14-23). Being un-willing to receive Him as the Son of God, and yet unable to account for His mighty works, they declared He was casting out demons through Beelzebub, the chief of demons. Jesus exposed the fallacy of their reasoning by showing that in that case Satun would be arrayed against himself, and therefore would destroy his own kingdom.

2. Refused to Believe His Miracles (vv. 29-32). They asked for a sign, to which He replied that they would have a sign from heaven in His death and resurrection. He reminded them, however, that their request showed unbellef surpassing that of the heathen queen of the South, and the wicked people of Nineveh.

3. Wickedness Denounced (vv. 37-He pronounced six woes upon those who were opposing Him and seeking His destruction.

(1) The Pharisees (vv. 37-41). These He denounced for (a) punctillously observing some minute rites and at the same time breaking the Ten Commandments. They carefully tithed the small herbs of the garden while practicing injustice to their fellowmen and withholding love from God. He pointed out to them the folly of attending to these external acts while the heart was filled with wickedness. (b) Desiring public recognition (v. 43). This is a common sin today. (c) For feigning humility (v. 44). He compares their hypocrisy to graves which are on a level with the ground and may be stepped upon uncons ly by someone, and thus defiled. We can avoid those who make their vanity known by boasting, but some are filled with this same wickedness who do not thus make it known.

(2) The Lawyers (vv. 45-54). Jesus' strictures on the hypocritical Pharisees aroused the lawyers, one of whom indignantly declared: "You are insulting us also." In replying to this Christ pronounced three wees upon them; (a) for placing burdensome requirements upon the people to which they themselves would not sumbit (v. 46). (b) For the murder of God's prophets (vv. 47-51). He showed that their attitude toward Him was the same that was shown to the prophets by thei fathers. (c) For eping back the knowledge of God by false interpretation of the Scriptures (vv. 52-54). There is no wickedness perhaps so great as that of supposed teachers of Ged's Word who keep its precious truths from the people by perverting its meaning.

Furnishes References

Manager-Yes, we need a demonstrator. Have you had any experi-

Gertie Gushington-Not really, but my gentleman friend says I am aw-fully demonstrative,

The Reward of Industry.

The Professor-Let us take the example of the busy ant. He is busy atl the time. He works all day and every

day. Then what happens? The Bright One-He gits stepped